The MEDICAL MISSIONARY

A Rich Kashmiri Woman Convalescing

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The MEDICAL MISSIONARY

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Editor: Sr. M. Elizabeth. Telephone: Decatur 2687

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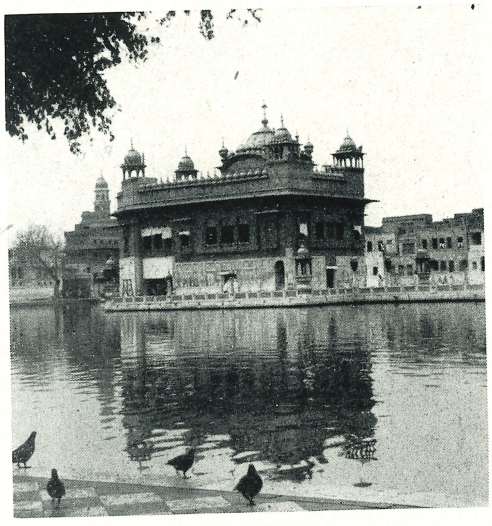
THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

By SISTER M. LAETITIA, R. N.

THE Sikhs always seemed to be very charitable (we have had many of them as patients in the Pindi Hospital) and it would be difficult to find nicer people anywhere; but it wasn't until I visited the Golden Temple in Amritsar that I learned all about them and the story of their religion. It runs this way. "Once upon a time" the most pure and holy cow being tired of the corruption of the world prayed to God to make it better. Her prayer was heard when, in 1468, Guru Nanak was born. When he was a child his father procured a teacher for him. Soon the teacher complained that the boy would not learn his lessons. When his father spoke to him about it he said: "I know all these things, I am only interested in the knowledge of God. Bring the teacher and you will see." This he did and the boy easily confounded the teacher. Then the father gave Nanak to a Brahmin and the same thing happened. Still Papa was not pleased so he gave his son over to a farmer to look after his cattle and to see if he could make something of him. Nanak only meditated while the cows ran riot in the fields. Then the farmer in great wrath called the unhappy parent to view the damage; but when they all took a jaunt out to the farmer's fields, lo, everything was twice as flourishing as before and all the crops that had been trampled down by the animals were standing up much higher than on the previous day. Another day, the boy fell asleep under the shade of a tree. As the sun moved, he was left, or should have been, in the burning rays of the sun, but a king cobra came along and shielded him with its hood. (Personally, I would rather have had the sun.) Some people passing by saw this and finally the father realized what a wonderful son he had.



THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

He did other wonderful things, too. When he was out in the desert, some unbelievers thinking that they would make a fool of him, asked him for something to eat. With very little food he is supposed to have fed a great crowd of people. But the most wonderful story of all is that which brings us to the building of the Temple. One day when Guru Nanak (Guru means teacher, was reading and teaching, a ball of fire weighing about two seers (four pounds)—I wonder how one weighs a ball of fire?—flashed into the room with a tremendous bang and hung over the teacher and his book. All took this to be a sign of his great sanctity and, strangely enough, a sign of the prosperity of India under the British Government. The people, therefore, decided to build a golden temple. They raised so much money that half was used for the temple and the other half to give a great feast to all the poor people.

Thus my guide, a fine-looking, black-bearded sikh, explained to me the story of his religion which was beautifully painted in minute pictures on the walls and floors of the temple; but I must go back to the beginning. In the first place, the temple is not really golden, only gilt, but when I saw it glittering in India's brilliant sunlight I could not tell the difference. It is one of a group of buildings and the lowest of the whole group. I was told that it was built thus to show that by humility we are exalted and that all should try to take a low place.

When I came up to the entrance, I asked the Sikh who was standing there if I might go in. "Yes," he said, "but you must first remove your shoes." That was soon done and I started off in my stocking feet when, fortunately, he called me back and presented me with a pair of socks to wear. I say "fortunately," as my stockings would have been worn to shreds, as I walked

about for nearly three hours. It took some courage, however, to get into those socks. Indeed, I almost went away without entering the temple, for they were about a "size ten" and were knitted in all colors imaginable: blue, green, yellow, red, white, and black. Afterwards, I paid a rupee for them and brought them home as a curio. They were well worth it!

DURSIS MENDING THE RED VELVET AND GOLD CANOPY FOR THE SACRED BOOK

Having donned the socks I approached the temple by a flight of wide steps and along a beautiful marble path which ran around a picturesque tank, the waters of which are said to contain healing powers. By the tank there was one old tree which the guide pointed out. It dates back to the beginning of the Sikh religion. The story is that under this tree a poor woman once brought her husband, who was a leper, and put him in a basket by the water while she went to beg. As he was sitting there he saw some crows bathing in the water. They were black when they went in, but when they came out they were white. He thought that this must be a miracle and wondered if perhaps he, too, might be changed. He went down into the water, and, sure enough, he was cured. When his wife came back, she, not recognizing him, disbelieved his story and said that he was trying to steal her from her real husband whom he had probably murdered. Then there was a great row. Finally, they decided to go to the holy Sikh prophet. He solved the problem for the poor woman by divining that the man was really her husband.

The temple itself has four doors, signifying that it is open to all the people of the world, even to Mohammedans, untouchables, and Christians. I saw a Guru sitting under a canopy, which I think was for the "sacred" book he was reading and not for the Guru. The book looks like an enormous bible and is carefully protected by a cloth and kept dusted with peacock feathers. (When Sikhs are ill or dying in our hospitals they usually have some one come in to read a few pages from a small edition of the "sacred" book,—I believe they call it the "Golden Book"). In several of the rooms I saw readers and noticed to my surprise that behind each one was an electric fan and overhead electric lights. It seemed all wrong to have twentieth-century improvements asserting themselves in this beautiful old oriental setting. All around me people were bowing down to the ground and touching their foreheads to the dust. The guide told me that they make an offering of a pice or two and receive marigolds, India's holy flower, or some sweet-scented flowers, in return. These they treasure very highly. It was very touching to watch the sweet little Sikh girls earnestly bowing their heads down to the ground. They seemed so intent on doing it exactly right. They reminded me of quaint little old women. In the center of the temple I saw people going up to an old Sikh who was kept very busy giving away some kind of soft sweet. I was conscious of people chanting in the distance (I learned afterward that Hindu, Mahommedan, and Sikh singers all go there to chant from the book), and when I looked away off in one corner where the sound seemed to come from, I noticed funny little bobs of cotton wool suspended from the ceiling by strings about six inches long. "What are they for?" I asked.

(To be concluded)

INCREASE OF ZEAL FOR THE MISSIONS

The Mission Intention of the Apostleship of Prayer for October is "Increase of Zeal for the Missions." As Father George Bull, S.J., says in The Messenger of the Sacred Heart, "If we love God as we should, we will be interested in anything that contributes to His greater glory; and if we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will want to share with all mankind the priceless gift of the Faith which is ours." His argument is certainly convincing and yet how little some people ever think about the missions. They reason that if they keep the commandments of God and the Church that that is all that is necessary. They tuck their religion away in the recesses of their hearts to be taken out at convenient or necessary moments. There are also the fervent, devout Catholics who stoutly maintain that "charity begins at home" and forget that Christ's Apostles in the very infancy of His Church, in response to His commands, ventured far from home to "teach all nations." There are many obstacles in the way of reaching "all nations," such as, lack of money, lack of vocations, age-old prejudices and customs; but it is prayer that moveth mountains and there is no Catholic who can not pray.

WASHINGTON

AS OUR readers will see by the picture, the Washington branch of our family has grown considerably. So much so, in fact, that the Medical Mission House walls are almost bursting their seams trying to shelter them. Every square inch of room is being utilized and, somehow or other, when Dr. Stern left for the missions, the space she vacated seemed to fill up immediately.

Dr. Stern's Departure Ceremony, by the way, was conducted by the Rev. Michael Mathis, C.S.C. She renewed her Mission Oath and the Rev. Francis Goodall, C. S. C., delivered a most appropriate sermon, stressing the fact that the spiritual consolations in the mission fields more than make up for the social and material deprivations.

"The Washington Branch of Our Family"

Sister M. Alma has returned to the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania to begin her third year. Sisters M. Eleanor and M. Léonie have begun their first year of study at the George Washington University Medical School.

RAWALPINDI

Dr. Dengel and one of the Sisters are still going out into the villages with the Ford. She writes in part: "We have been out in the villages all the week. The people are extremely kind and welcome us with open arms."

In another letter a Sister writes: "Our hospital has solved the wooden applicator problem for itself. We were running out of that commodity (those sticks the doctor uses to paint one's throat with), and tried the local chemist's shop without result. Then we tried three other shops. One of them proffered a small bundle of what looked like the pipe stems for the "old corn cob pipe." These wouldn't quite fill the bill. Finally, the local shop sent over a bundle for two rupees, or thereabouts. These were of the right length, but all shapes and none with rounded ends. An Indian lady who was a doctor, came to call and we asked her where she got her supply. It turned out that the brooms of India are made out of small reeds. These not only make perfect applicators, but for about a penny one may purchase a bundle of several hundred."

There was a place, there was a time,
Whether by night or day,
The Spirit came and left His gift,
And went upon His way.

* * *

Thy choice, O God of goodness then,
I lovingly adore,
O give me grace to keep Thy grace,
And grace to merit more.

—*Father Faber.*

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MARRIAGE AND THE CATHOLIC GIRL OF MALABAR

By E. J. ANTHONY, B.A.

THE women of India are diversified in life and habits by extraction, religion, climate, color, and civilization. Each sect to which they belong has its own determining marks. Consequently, the Catholics who are scattered over the whole Malabar peninsula have habits and customs encrusted with Indian characteristics. This is especially true of their marriage customs.

Girls are married at a very early age, the age limit fixed by the Church being awaited with anxious care. Instances are not rare where the attainment of the fourteenth year is availed of with feverish haste for the consummation of the long-standing proposal. This is so because they believe that girls are a commodity not safe to keep. Illiteracy, inexperience or ineptitude are of small consideration. Parents will only keep girls at school if their attendance is advantageous in fixing up a good match. Frequently a silent conquest goes on between girls desirous of education and parents desirous of marrying them off. However, times are changing as the educated who support the girls in this desire are becoming a factor to be reckoned with. If the attitude of young men who make a positive preference for young wives could also be changed, the marriage age of the Catholic girl would be raised as high, say, as that of Japan.

MATCH MAKING

As with age, the old order prevails with occasional exceptions. The professional match makers still go on their rounds and call at the house of a girl who is just attaining her teens, and without giving her any hint, make proposals to the father or mother, preferably the latter, giving glowing pictures of the party for whom they hold the brief. They are accorded a warm reception and promised a good reward. On the male side this is usually a certain portion of the dowry. On the other side, if the father is impressed with the reports of the prospective wife for his son, he sets out in company with a few of his kith and kin to see her on an appointed day. The girl appears before the party and says to everyone "praise be to Jesus." This takes one or two minutes, during which time, everyone rivets his gaze upon the girl's head, face, hair, feet, and in short, her whole appearance. She, confused by the presence of strangers and confounded by the target of looks hurries away, taking shelter in some corner. The visitors then go aside to exchange impressions and if satisfied partake of the repast prepared for them. If they are dissatisfied, they leave without touching anything in token of dissatisfaction.

AN EDUCATED CATHOLIC GIRL

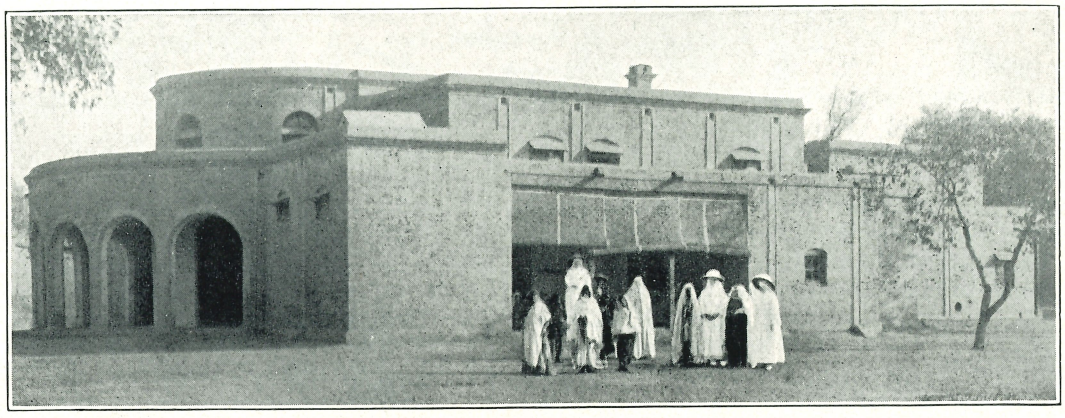
THE BETROTHAL

The question of dowry becomes all important after the exchange of visits. At the present time the demand is for "cash down" in the true Brahmin style. In very rich families, payment is delayed until partition. Payment ranges from Rs. 25, among the poor, to Rs. 1,000 from the middle class, and up to Rs. 100,000 in exceptionally high circles. There is only one type of marriage which relegates the all important dowry question to a side issue or leaves it out altogether. This is where the male party is acted upon by love. These instances are very rare and even then to meet the angry opposition of a "Father Allen" or "Lord Ullin," young men are driven to shifts. Sometimes to avoid a preemptory injunction being thrown against their union, young men advance amounts themselves, surreptitiously.

The dowry question settled, the betrothal is fixed. Here, the Church intervenes for the first time. The function will be allowed only if the parties have the requisite number of attendance at the Sunday class to their credit. If it is short, thanks to the male party (usually), the shortage has to be made up. You should see the wrath of

(*Continued on page* 8)

DR. AGNES McLAREN (1837-1913)



ST. CATHERINE'S HOSPITAL, RAWALPINDI
Founded by Dr. Agnes McLaren, with the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Charge

(NOTE)—This is the continuation of the abridged translation from the French of the life of Dr. Agnes McLaren, the great pioneer doctor who initiated Catholic Medical Mission Work in Punjab.)

Synopsis: Dr. Agnes McLaren was the daughter of Duncan McLaren, a Presbyterian, one of the foremost citizens of Edinburgh, and of Priscilla Bright, a Quaker. As a young girl, Agnes was a devoted friend of the poor. At the age of 37 she went to Montpellier to study at the University to become a doctor. She first practiced medicine in Cannes. After making a retreat, annually, for 20 years under the direction of a Catholic priest, Agnes McLaren finally embraced the faith in 1898, and shortly after that joined the Third Order of St. Dominic. At the age of 72 she began her missionary labors, going out to Rawalpindi, India, where with ecclesiastical approval she started a fully-equipped hospital and several dispensaries. In the foregoing chapter she bent every effort to have some modern religious community take over this great work. She spent much time in Rome, for that reason, interesting priests, bishops, cardinals and even His Holiness in this cause. After sowing the seed, she returned to France where she retired to Antibes.

ANTIBES which Agnes had chosen as a place more quiet than Cannes, and more suited to her increasing age, is a little town situated on the Mediterranean coast, facing Nice. From this it gets its name, Antibes, or Anti-Nice,—in olden times, Antipolis or Anti-town. The rugged gray shore contrasts sharply with the deep blue of the Mediterranean and, as one's eye travels inland, cliffs give place to steep hills, and hills to rocky, often snow-capped mountains. Not only are the color contrasts (which give this land its name, Cote d'Azur), and the contour contrasts picturesque, but added to this there is the beauty of an exceedingly varied and irregular coast line. Here, is a very circular bay, but a little farther on a jagged pointed cape juts out into the sea; farther still, a short stretch of straight shore line is punctuated with massive rocks so washed by the sea as to simulate fantastic castles or fortresses.

The house which Agnes had bought, "Villa St. Anne," was situated on the Cape of Antibes. It was not a luxurious one, nor was it unusual, but its Chapel was considered a little gem. Everything in it was according to her own style which may be expressed in two words, simple and grand. Most notable was the Tabernacle door of carved marble representing Our Lord with a gentle, yet sad, expression. It was the work of one of her compatriots. She had obtained some stones from the Firth of Forth which she had had the jeweller cut into a large number of cabochons. Some of these she had set into the Tabernacle door, others, were set in the base of the chalice and of the ciborium. In Agnes' eyes, these cabochons were more than a souvenir, they were an offering to Our Lord from her native land and for those who lived there. It was the prayer and the desire of her heart to see these people all return to the knowledge and love of the God of the Holy Catholic Church, the God of the Blessed Eucharist.

The little Chapel not only served to promote her own piety but was also open to the people of the neighborhood. She had obtained permission to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved and would permit no one to look after the Sanctuary lamp but herself. She also laid out and cared for the vestments.

In order to be assured of the services of a chaplain, Agnes had devised the plan of inviting priests who were in sad need of a rest to come to Antibes. She arranged for them to stay at the Grand Hotel and they agreed to say Mass in her Chapel during their stay.

Even in these later years, she sought out the sick, and the needy, everywhere carefully concealing from others her good works. Nor did she forget her family ties. Agnes often wrote to her relations and they came to visit her on many occasions and she went to Scotland for a family reunion. When she sent out her Christmas cards she always remembered the servants of her childhood days.

In spite of her delicate health and her many illnesses, and thanks to the serenity, regularity, and sobriety of her life, Agnes attained the age of 75 years. She planned to make a last journey to Rome for the purpose of obtaining a favorable

reply to the question of medical studies and the taking of a doctorate by Religious. She hoped to see once more Pope Pius X, whom she had known in Venice before he was raised to the Pontifical Throne and she wished also to see the Father General of the Dominicans of whom she had often spoken to her intimate friends. God, however, had arranged things otherwise. On April 9, 1915, she was attacked by influenza which developed into pleurisy with congestion of the right lung. She would have recovered if her heart had been stronger, but it was extremely weak and this precipitated the crises. She had retired to bed on Monday, April 7. The following day, Canon Morsset, her Chaplain at the time, coming to visit her found her in tears. She asked him for the last Sacraments. There is no doubt that finding the end near, when about to bid farewell to this life, with its years of joys and sorrows, that her feelings had overcome her. She received Holy Communion with great fervor and asked to receive Extreme Unction immediately afterwards. A few days later, she again received the Holy Viaticum.

She had asked for a Sister to nurse her and she was looked after with respect and skill. Agnes was quiet, obedient, gentle, and prayed continually. She offered her sufferings for the Holy Father who was himself ill at the time. She spoke of death with great calmness. The Sister in charge heard her say several times: "I thank God for all the graces He has given me. I have great peace of soul. There were people who did not like to die away from their own country; I am happy to die in France. I love France very much. The Holy Bible tells us that we are but dust and that into dust we must return. Let them bury me where I die." Seeing clearly that all hope of recovery was gone, she announced the evening before her death: "Tomorrow will be a great day for me, I shall see God, my Creator and my Father. I look forward to the Resurrection!"

It was with these sentiments of faith and gratitude that she died on Thursday evening, April 17, 1913, without any agony, in great peace like one of the predestined. On her death bed, it was said she looked like a Roman virgin of the first century.

Many English Protestants who were present at her funeral found our religious ceremonies very imposing. The children's voices, pure and fresh and full of life, singing the Mass of the Dead with all its terrors but also from the point of view of faith with all its beauties and benefits, was calculated to make a lively impression on the congregation present.

In mourning for the death of Agnes McLaren, not only the church, but the whole town participated. The shops were closed as in time of public sorrow. Even outside of Antibes and France itself, the press, particularly in England rendered homage to the deceased, praising as a rather rare thing, the care she took to hide her good works, and applied to her the words of the American poet Whittier:

"Noiseless as light that meets the darkness is
He wrought as duty led and honor bid.
No trumpet heralds victories like his
The unselfish worker in his work is hid!"

All who knew Agnes McLaren felt themselves better for having known her and felt the loss of a great soul from their midst.

(The End)

Editor's Note: In 1911 the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary took over St. Catherine's Hospital which Dr. McLaren had founded in Rawalpindi. It was in their hands from 1911 until 1927. In 1920, Dr. Dengel, who had been led by the inspiration of Dr. McLaren to study medical mission work, took charge of St. Catherine's Hospital and worked there for three and one-half years. Realizing the great field open to medical missionary women in India, Dr. Dengel returned in 1924 to England and later to America to raise money for this purpose. This led to the founding of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries. St. Catherine's Hospital is now a school, its place having been filled by our Holy Family Hospital.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Plea for Three Beautiful Customs, by Rev. W. H. Walsh, S.J. (The Boy Saviour Movement, 986 Park Avenue, New York. Price, 10 cents; by mail, 15 cents.)

In this pamphlet Father Walsh appeals to teachers, parents, and all who have anything to do with Catholic youth, to combat the dangerous tendency of the day in its irreverent disregard for time-honored customs. The three pleas are, first, to attain the use of the second person, singular, in addressing God; second, to bow at the mention of the Holy Name; and third, to bow at the Elevation of the Mass. It is a regrettable fact that Father Walsh's experience has shown him the need for this plea and he hopes that this publication will prevent further harm as well as check that which has been done.

WHAT THE SOUL IS MADE OF

Father X to First Boy (after explaining at length to his class that everyone possesses a soul within himself): "What have you inside of you?"

First Boy: "Chaval" (rice) "Father."

Father X tries to make his explanation more simple. Then turning to Second Boy: "What have you inside of you?"

Second Boy: "Curry, Father."

Father X explains a third time, then asks: "What have I inside of me?"

Answer: "Roti" (white bread) "Father!"

MARRIAGE AND THE CATHOLIC CHILD OF MALABAR

(*Continued from page* 5)

the parents on seeing their cherished plan upset by the delinquency of their children!

On the betrothal day, the male party in company with a friend goes to the church of his future partner where the latter arrives in charge of a matron. In the presence of the priest, the girl sees for the first time the man with whom she is to be united "till death do them part" for weal or woe. At present the girls are forward in giving their consent which is a decided contrast to their predecessors of the last century who exhibited the conventional Malayan slowness. Cases have been known where a girl has shown too much reluctance and the priest has gone away leaving the girl to shout out her reply from a storeyed parochial. The choice is so discretionary that the girls need not often disturb the smooth flow of events with a dissent. In objectionable cases, however, where there has been foul play by a stepfather or mother, girls do give the solemn word of disapproval.

The Marriage

The betrothal over, the prospective bridegroom is invited to the house of the bride. There he is invited to partake of a light repast and introduced to the household.

The period of preparation follows. In the girl's house, the clink of the goldsmith's hammer combating with the malleability of gold is heard. Ornaments are being made for her ears, neck, wrists, head, and ankles. For days and days this goes on, the result bearing out the saying that Indians have their banks in their wives.

When the wedding day arrives, the bride is conducted to the Church by the bridal party consisting of men and women of an even number. If the ceremony is carried on in the old style, she is shielded from the sun by a huge silken umbrella ornamented with gold and silver hangings hired from the church. If it is a marriage in high circles, there is a whole line of such umbrellas borne by the attendants who follow the bride in the procession. The umbrella is one of the seventy-two symbols granted to Christians by the ancient Hindu potentate of Malabar.

The bridegroom also arrives with a lot of paraphernalia. In the presence of the priest and those assembled, he secures around the neck of the bride a small gold ornament called: "Thali," a Hindu heritage, and puts over her head a veil.

After the service is over, they all proceed to the house of the bride to the accompaniment of a band and native drums.

The girl is taken formally to her husband's house one or two days after the function. In the meantime, the bridegroom lives in her house almost as a stranger. Even after they go to his house, he is not expected to speak to her. It is only after they return to her home on the following Sunday that the girl is formally introduced to her lord and master. There is a regular round of visits to and fro for some time, after which the girl enters seriously into business. She may be young, but she is reckoned as a member of the married class and expected to acquit herself accordingly. She must be subservient to her husband who is her lord and she must bear complete obedience to his parents.

All of this is true of marriage customs among a section of Indian Catholic girls. The Anglo-Indians and the Eurasians have customs analagous to those of Westerners. Although the Indian system may appear curious, it is the heritage of the past and sanctified by custom. It is of a piece with the generality of the practice prevailing in Hindu circles, complete submission to parents being the keynote to the whole.

THE WURZBURG YEAR BOOK OF 1933

The Wurzburg Year Book, always of interest to those who have at heart the medical mission apostolate, is particularly so this year because of its being the tenth anniversary of the existence of the Institute. It was founded by Rt. Rev. Msgr. P. C. Becker, S.D.S., in 1922, on his return from Assam (India) where he had been Prefect Apostolic for seven years. In reading the review of their work of the past ten years one could not help but be impressed by what had been accomplished in such a short time. They have already in the mission field fifteen doctors, three of whom are women. The Institute is represented in China; South, West, and Central Africa; the South Sea; the Dutch Indies; and the Amazonas. Their present enrollment consists of sixty-seven members, eighteen of whom are women.

Professor Dr. G. Wunderle, Rector of the University of Wurzburg, has written a very convincing article on the Apologetical Worth of Medical Mission Activities. Of particular value are his comments on the relationship between the missionary doctor and the medicine man in the mind of the pagan. He believes that the missionary doctor, by exposing the lack of medical knowledge of the medicine man, at the same time weakens the spiritual grip that the latter has over his followers,—the medical and the spiritual being so closely interwoven in pagan cultures.

Dr. Tietze may well be congratulated on the notable success he has achieved in gaining the confidence of the people of Flores, in the Dutch Indies. The native king added greatly to the doctor's prestige by attending with his court the blessing of Dr. Tietze's new house. It was apparently quite an affair as the evening before the event, the queen sent a small house made of pastry and decorated with roses, and the king sent a buffalo. After the blessing of the house, the king and queen attended a banquet in the doctor's house, while the natives feasted on the compound.

Dr. Tietze is planning to enlarge his hospital and the queen has promised to contribute to the project.

There are many other articles in the year book which we would like to review if space permitted.

The Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries is a religious community founded for the purpose of bringing medical aid to the foreign mission field. Please address enquiries to: Dr. Anna Dengel, Catholic Medical Mission House, Brookland, Washington, D. C.